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JANUARY 1970

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for

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PROJECT CODE 8100



HAWAII INSTITUTE OF GEOPHYSICS

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII



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T-WAVE GENERATION MECHANISMS

Ву

Rockne H. Johnson

and

Roger A. Norris

January 1970

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Approved by Director Rosellard

Date: 10 February 1970

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of earthquake body waves to T waves is as efficient at deep slopes as at slopes which transect the sofar axis. Moreover, spectral studies of T phase signatures have shown no basis for distinguishing between the two cases. As simple downslope propagation is inadequate to explain the production of T waves at deep slopes, that process is relegated a minor role in favor of scattering from the sea floor as the dominant mechanism. A slope in the direction of propagation insures that once energy is scattered in that direction the probability of its being unfavorably rescattered upon successive approaches to the sea floor will be less. Scattering near the sea surface is detectable in the absence of bottom-scattered T waves. Such abyssally generated T waves display a distinctly higher frequency spectrum when originating in subarctic regions than when originating in lower latitudes. This difference is ascribed to downward ducting of higher frequency energy from the subarctic surface channel.

INTRODUCTION

A widely recognized gap in extant hypotheses for the generation of <u>T</u> waves is the explanation of the strong signals received from the East Pacific Rise. There the ocean is too deep to support the production of sofar rays by downslope propagation. The <u>T</u> phases received, however, reached at those generated at shallow slopes much more closely than those generated at abyssal depths (i.e., in close proximity to trenches). A second problem is the observed difference between the spectrum of abyssal <u>T</u> waves generated in the subarctic and that of <u>T</u> waves from lower latitudes. In order to resolve these problems a study has been conducted of sonagrams (intensity level contoured in the frequency-time plane) of <u>T</u> phases from over 400 earthquakes occurring all around the Pacific.

BACKGROUND

Tolstoy and Ewing (1950) recognized the importance of a sloping bottom in the production of <u>T</u> waves. The specific mechanism of multiple reflection between the sea surface and its downsloping bottom (downslope propagation) was first detailed by Milne (1959). Johnson et al. (1963) showed that, for a 10° slope and an acoustic profile typical of the Aleutians, the downslope propagation process would produce sound channel rays only if the rays entered the water at depths of less than about 500 meters. For RSR (refracted surface-reflected) rays this limiting depth is perhaps doubled. Although <u>T</u> waves originating over ocean trenches have been observed, their spectral and time-varying characteristics differ markedly from slope <u>T</u> waves and a generative mechanism involving scattering at the sea surface has been proposed (Johnson et al., 1968). These authors noted, however, that <u>T</u> phases originating along the East Pacific Rise display the low-frequency spectrum of slope <u>T</u> phases, yet the

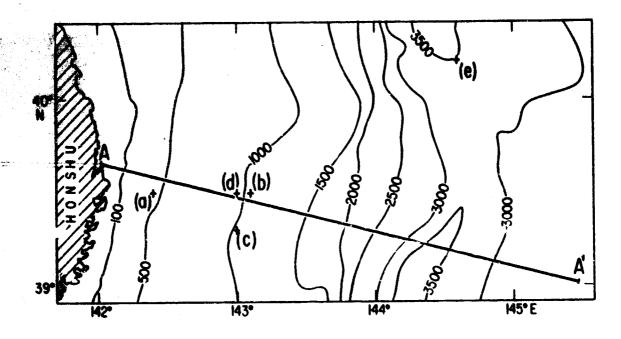
waves cannot be accounted for by downslope propagation. Cooks (1967) also recognized this predicament. It is necessary, then, to modify the hypothesis for slope $\underline{\mathbf{T}}$ -phase generation to find the $\underline{\mathbf{T}}$ phases generated at deeper slopes.

DATA

The data presented in the appendix to this report are sonagrams made from over 400 earthquake T phases tape-recorded from sound-channel hydrophones of the Pacific Missile Range at Oahu, Midway, Wake, and Eniwetok islands. Tapes were ordered for analysis if the paper-drum recordings from the stations contained T phases from earthquakes which were identified by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (C&GS) preliminary determination of epicenter cards as being from abyssal regions or from an earthquake of magnitude 6 or greater. In processing the tapes, every T phase generated by an earthquake identified by the C&GS was sonagrammed irrespective of magnitude or region. No attempt was made to compensate for the response of the hydrophone-cable-amplifier systems, although their characteristics vary from installation to installation and systematic spectral differences are thereby introduced.

DEEP-SLOPE T WAVES

A verification that T waves are inded radiated from deep slopes is illustrated by a sequence of earthquakes which occurred eff northern Honshu in June 1968. The foci of four of the earthquakes are shown in Figure 1 as well as the focus of an earthquake farther offshore. The source data are listed in Table 1. Figure 2 presents the sonagrams of the corresponding T phases. (Frequency



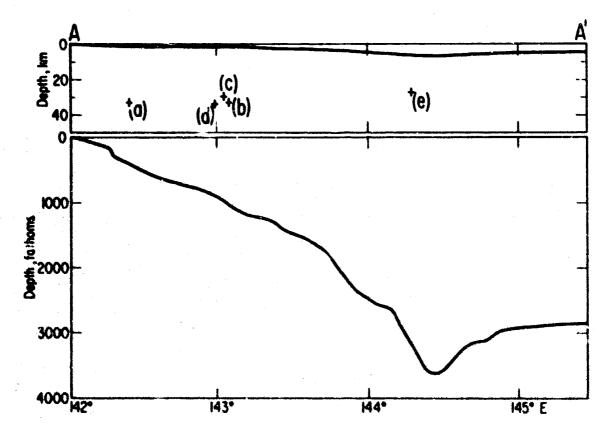


Fig. 1. The foci of five earthquakes off northern Honshu shown both in plan (upper) and elevation (lower). Bottom contours are in fathoms. Source data are listed in Table I and sonagrams are presented in Figure 2. The bathymetry along section A-A' is shown both true scale and with 20X vertical exaggeration.

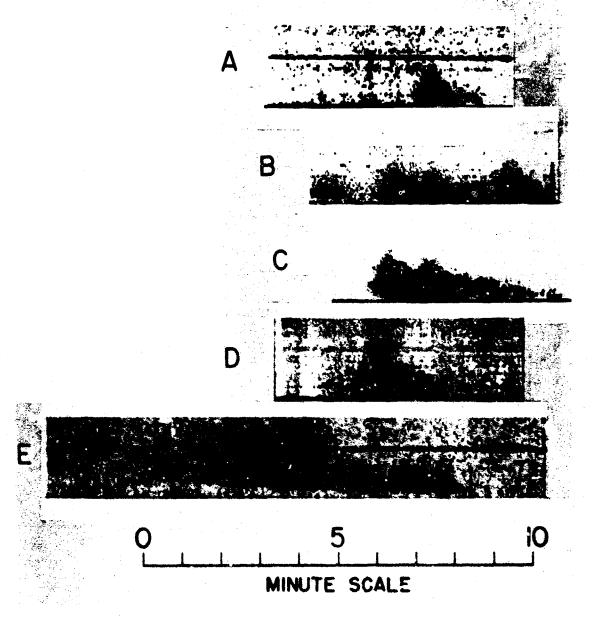


FIG. 2. Sonagrams of T phases from earthquakes off northern Honshu, Eucl are shown in Figure 1 and source data are listed in Table 1. (Frequency range is 0 to 50 hz in these and all other sonagrams.)

Calachad Off Hanshu Bankhanahan

Table I. Source Data for Events Shown in Figure 1.

Event	Lat.,	Lat., Long.,	Depth,	Mag.,	Date	GMT,			
	•N	*E	km	Мь	d m	y	h	*	8
a .	39.5	1/2.4	33	4.1	18 Jun	68	13	38	01
b	39.5	143.1	33	4.3	12 Jun	68	17	23	18
c	39.3	143.0	30	5.1	12 Jun	68	15	48	59.5
đ	39.5	143.0	34	4.5	26 Jun	68	20	26	19.0
e	40.2	144.6	27	5.0	24 Mar	67	04	11	29.6
		•							

range: 0 to 50 his bottom to top on all sonagrams in this report.)

Event (a) is characteristic of slope T phases while event (e)
generated both an abyssal and a slope T phase at a spacing
appropriate for the distance of the epicenter from the continental
shelf. Likewise, events (b), (c), and (d) also generated two
groups of T waves, each of which is appropriately spaced for the
distance of the epicenter from the shelf. In cases (b), (c), and
(d), however, the first group of waves lacks the identifying
characteristics of an abyssal T phase, the only notable distinction
from the second group being the inclusion of higher frequencies.
The water depth at epicentars (b), (c), and (d) was about 2000
meters with a bottom slope of one to two degrees. These conditions
are clearly insufficient to produce even RSR rays by downslope
propagation over a smooth bottom (Aubrat, 1963).

In fact, however, continental and island slopes are not smooth, but are cut by submarine canyons and crossed by fault scarps which serve to scatter acoustic energy upon initial refraction into the water as well as during multiple reflection within the water wedge. This scattering materially reduces the

length of slope required to produce horizontal rays.

The scattering mechanism is equally operable at shallow slopes and must equally cause the production of shallow-slope T waves. The shallow-slope T phases may be slightly stronger at the lower frequencies however, since longer wavelengths, which are not as readily scattered, can be deflected into horizontal paths by the length of a slope available. The lack of higher frequency energy for the shallow-slope T phases shown in Figure 2 is ascribable to attenuation over the longer ground path. This variation of low-frequency content with water depth was recognized by Duennebier (1968) as a decrease of peak frequency with time over the early portions of slope T phases from the Fox Islands.

Computed sources of slope T phases have been found to form clusters indicative of topographically controlled sites of strong radiation (Johnson and Norris, 1968a; Duennebier and Johnson, 1967). By contrast, abyssal T-phase sources appear to radiate most strongly from the earthquake epicenter. The excitation of a uniform scattering horizon is inferred from the very gradual onset and decay rates of abyssal T waves. The onset and decay rates of deep-slope T waves are practically identical with those of shallow-slope T waves, suggesting a similar topographic control of radiation. The lack of any basis for distinction between the two groups of signals is readily apparent in Figure 3, which contains a selection of sonagrams from earthquakes along the East Pacific Rise as well as a selection of shallow-slope T waves (Table II).

The mechanism and conditions for generation of deep-slope. It waves also apply to I waves from the East Pacific Rise. Although here the average slope is much more gradual than at the margins of the Pacific, the topography is characteristically faulted, the faults apporently being in close association with earthquake epicenters. Such fault scarps, then, at once provide the

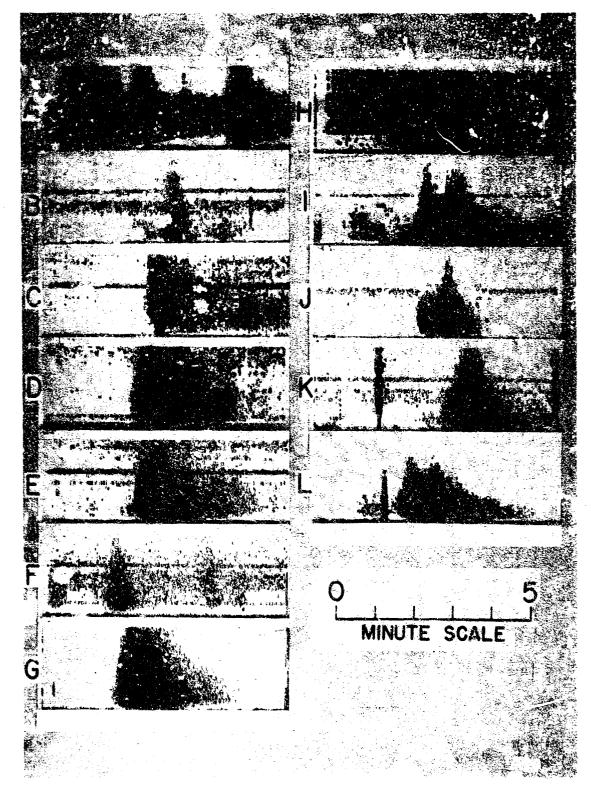


FIG. 3. Selected sonagrams of T phases from the East Pacific Rise (on the left) and selected shallow-slope T phases (on the right). Source data are listed in Table II.

Table II. Source Data for Events Shown in Figure 3.

Selected East Pacific Rise Earthquakes (Fig. 3, left)

Event	Lat.	Let. Long.	Depth, Mag., km Mb	Date,			GMT,			
				Mb	đ	22	у.	h ·	\$	5
8	44. 2N	128.8	33	5.4	28	дес	67	06	26	15.8
b	42.9N	126.2	-33	4.9	26	Sep	67	05	51	11
c	2.6N	101.8	33	4.9	28	Mar	68	12	44	38.0
đ	2.1N	101.J	33	4.7	30	Dec	67	02	46	55
e	4.08	104.1	33	4.5	16	Jun	68	14	01	22
f	32.8S	111.7	33	5.4	29	Dec	66	22	16	22.7
8	54.88	136.0	33	5.4	9	Sep	67	16	52	01.3

Selected Shallow-Slope T Phases (Fig. 3, right)

						·
h	40.6N	125.0	33	4.4	17 Jun 68	03 05 44
1	40.5N	124.ó	05	5.8	10 Dec 67	12 06 50.3
j	37.0N	121.0	11	5.0	18 Dec 67	17 24 31.9
k	20.08	70.3	60	4.6	8 Nov 67	10 47 45.3
1	21.58	70.4	53	5.8	25 Dec 67	10 41 31.6

scattering facets and the localized radiators for deep-slope $\underline{\mathbf{T}}$ wave generation.

<u>T</u>-phase strength offers no basis for distinguishing between deep-slope and shallow-slope <u>T</u> phases. <u>T</u> phases from the Gorda Ridge (Northrop et al., 1968)—which is well onlow the sofar axisare at least as strong, relative to earthquake magnitude, as slope <u>T</u> phases from the Aleutian Ridge (Johnson and Northrop, 1966;

Tehnson and Morris, 1968a). Deep-towed-echosounder profiles of the Gorda Ridge indicate faulted blocks with scarps dipping at 30-dagree angles (Atwater and Mudie, 1968). Such rugged terrain probably accounts for strong T-wave generation.

T phases originating along southern portions of the East Pacific Rise are equally as strong as those from the Gorda Ridge. Here the relief along the crest of the rise is more subdued, however earthquake epicenters are found to lie principally along the steep-sided fracture zones which offset the rise (Menard, 1966; Sykes, 1963).

Duennebier (1968), in describing an Eniwetok hydrophone recording of a magnitude 6.2 earthquake under the Mariana Ridge, states that energy was continuously received at the hydrophone from the time of the P phase arrival until after the arrival of the slope T phase from the Mariana Ridge. Strong signals were received at intermediate times, corresponding to P-wave travel to intervening seamounts followed by T-wave travel to the hydrophone. Although, as Duennebier points out, the tops of these seamounts are well below the sofar axis, such steep slopes (Robertson and Kibblewhite, 1966) may be expected to radiate T waves into RSR and off-axis sofar paths with relative efficiency.

Two earthquakes from the North Pacific Basin have their foci (Table III) under the newly discovered Emperor Fracture Zone (Erickson et al., 1970). Here, the bottom is characterized by irregular ridges and troughs with elevations no more than 1 km above the regional level. Since all depths in the epicentral region are greater than the bottom of the sofar channel, only RSR and multiply reflecting rays can be generated by scatter at the sea floor. The T phases recorded at Midway (Figure 4a and b) show the characteristic broad spectrum of such bottom-scatt d waves, but in addition they show the gradual onset and decay that is suggestive of a uniform scattering horizon. This effect may be due to the alignment of the topography with the direction to Midway or the

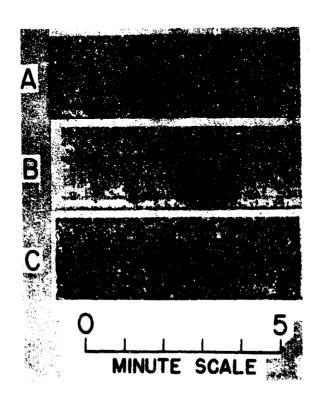


FIG. 4. Sonagrams of T phases from earthquakes under the deep-ocean floor. Source data are listed in Table III.

result of the superposition of near-surface scattered (abyesel)

T waves upon bottom-scattered waves.

Table III. Source Data for Events Shown in Figure 4.

Event	Lat.	Long.	Depth,		Date,	GMT,		
					d m y	h m s		
4	44.8N	174.5E	39	5.5	28 Apr 68	04 18 15.7		
ь	44.8N	174.7E	33	4.3	28 Apr 68	06 23 02		
ε	12.ON	130.8W	33	5.3	24 Sep 66	08 57 10.2		

Figure 4c shows another Pacific Basin T phase with its focus (Table III) under the less well-charted ocean floor between Clarion and Clipperton fracture zones. The low strength of this T phase, relative to the earthquake magnitude, suggests a lack of topographic relief in the epicentral region.

PROPAGATION OF DEEP-SLOPE T WAVES

RSR paths exist when the speed of sound in the bottom water is greater than it is at the surface. This condition is easily ust in higher latitudes where the surface water is cold; but in the tropical and sub-tropical Pacific, existence of the condition depends strongly on water depth. From about 45°N = 40°S the East Pacific Rise is too shallow to permit RSR propagation. Within this region such sound energy as is scattered clear of a sloping bottom will enter the sofar channel as off-axis rays. At higher latitudes proportionately more energy will be scattered into initially RSR paths. Such paths may become totally refracted sofar paths upon entering regions of warmer surface water.

Unattenuated propagation by totally reflecting paths (normal

mode) is theoretically possible in a constant-depth ocean. However, if bottom scattering is an acceptable mechanism for slope T-wave generation, a continuation of that scattering over the travel path would militate against propagation—by normal mode—to significant distances. The very low frequencies at which sound may be effectively propagated by bottom-reflecting normal mode in the deep ocean are beyond the sensing range of presently installed hydrophones.

In computing T-phase source locations, it has been assumed that the most intense arrival travels at sofar-axis sound speed (Johnson, 1966). As no near-axis sofar rays are generated by the proposed deep-slope T-wave mechanism, a somewhat higher apparent sound speed would be appropriate to such cases. For example, in the vicinity of Midway, the sofar ray which is horizontal at a 3000-meter depth has an apparent speed that is 0.3% higher than the speed of the sefar axis ray. Such a difference in speed would produce about an S-second arrival-time difference over the path from the tropical East Pacific Rise to Midway. This would correspond to a source location difference of .25°. The simple, sharply peaked signature of East Pacific Rise T phases should readily allow the detection of such a discrepancy were the epicenter known with sufficient accuracy. Such is not likely to be the case in this remote region of the Pacific, however.

ABYSSAL T WAVES

Situations where the bottom cannot scatter energy into RSR or sofar paths occur where the ocean floor is level or at a greater depth than adjacent areas in the direction of the receiver. Johnson et al. (1968) detected <u>T</u> waves from such regions in the subarctic Pacific and termed them "abyssally generated". The signals were characterized by very gradual onset, a lack of low frequencies, and

a low strength relative to earthquake magnitude. They usually appear as the forerunner of a slope-generated <u>T</u> phase (Duennebier, 1968).

For Pacific earthquakes in lower latitudes, the forerunners, which may commence at the time for direct P-wave arrival, show no perceptible difference in spectrum from the slope arrivals. Figure 5 illustrates this contrast between the forerunners of subarctic and lower latitude T phases (source data listed in Table IV). As previously noted, the occasional intensification of

Table IV. Source Data for Events Shown in Figure 5.

Event	Lat. Long.	Depth,	Mag.,	Date,			CHT,			
		-	km	Mb	ď	•	y	h	1	
4	50.6N	171.3W	39	6.5	7	Aug	66	02	13 05.	
ь	44.3N	151.7E	26	5.8	7	Dec	66	17	17 42.4	
c	40.8N	143.2E	07	7.9	16	May	68	00	48 55.	
d	27.4N	144.3E	40	4.6	6	Feb	. 64	08	00 35.	
e	20.8N	146.3E	43	6.2	10	Feb	66	14	21 10.	
f	18.4N	146.5E	77	5.0	20	Jan	68	20	06 48.	
8	7.15	81.6W	23	6.5	29	Aug	63	15	30 31.	

signal strength in the lower latitude events may be accounted for by radiation from intervening seasounts. However, even the continuous portion of the lower latitude forerunners has essentially the same frequency distribution as the slope T waves that follow.

The most distinctive acoustic feature of subarctic (and arctic) waters is the absence of a deep sound channel (Johnson and Norris, 1968b). Although a shallow, subsurface, velocity minimum may exist in summer, propagation is predominantly RSR. Kutschale (1961) found that explosion signals which propagated through the Arctic Ocean exhibited a dispersion of frequencies which was nicely

explained by normal-mode theory. For a given mode, higher frequency energy is concentrated nearer the surface and propagates at a correspondingly lower group velocity.

Upon entering a region with warmer surface water, shallower RSR rays become sofar rays. This ducting of higher frequency energy into the sofar channel, which occurs over paths to the PMR hydrophones from the subarctic but not from the Mariana or southern Japan trenches, may therefore partially explain the spectral differences in abyssal T waves.

The appearance of a low-frequency cutoff on sonagrams of many subarctic abyssal T phases (Fig. 5) strongly suggests that their initial propagation is confined to a surface layer. According to Kibblewhite and Denham (1965), the minimum duct-depth L for trapping any modes for frequency f is

$$L = 0.54 c_0 (f^2g)^{-1/3}$$

where co is sound speed at the surface and o is a constant gradient of speed. Figure 6 is a graph of this equation for $c_0 = 1460 \text{ m sec}^{-1}$ and $g = 0.014 \text{ sec}^{-1}$. If 10 hz is taken as a typical low-cutoff frequency, it is seen that subarctic abyssal T waves are ducted within at least the upper 700 meters of water. The absence of lower frequencies must be ascribed to the absence of significant large-dimensioned scatterers at sufficient depth to excite antinodes for sound pressure for lower frequencies. At lower latitudes, scattering in much of this 700-meter layer, as from a rough thermocline, will occur within the sofar channel. Here the interference patterns of normal-mode propagation are not conditioned by a surface boundary and depths of antinodes are indeterminate. This may account for the lower frequencies of T-phase forerunners from the region of the Mariana and southern Japan trenches, although, alternatively, the abundance of seamounts over the paths from that region may be lesponsible.

The fact that slope I phases from the subarctic contain fre-

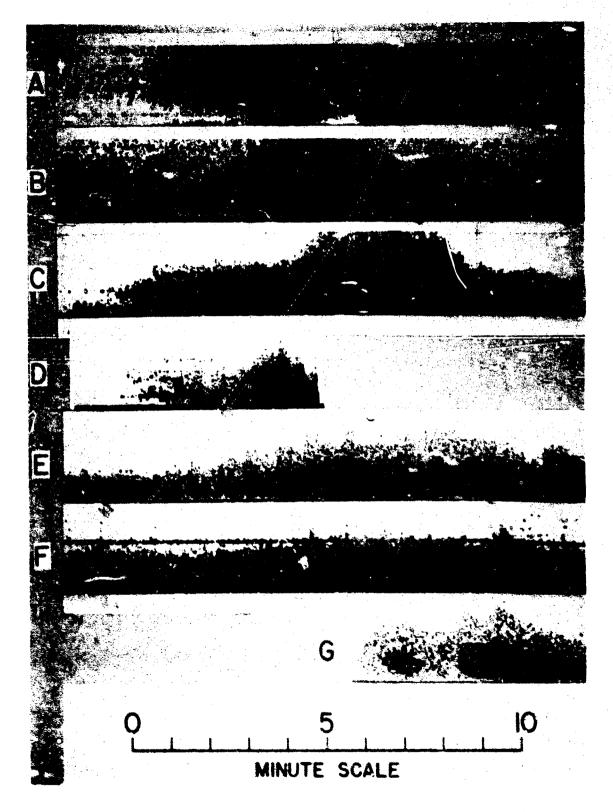


FIG. 5. 7 phases, with absumal forerunners from the subarctic +V. B. and C+ contrasted with those from lower latitudes. Source data are listed in Table IV.

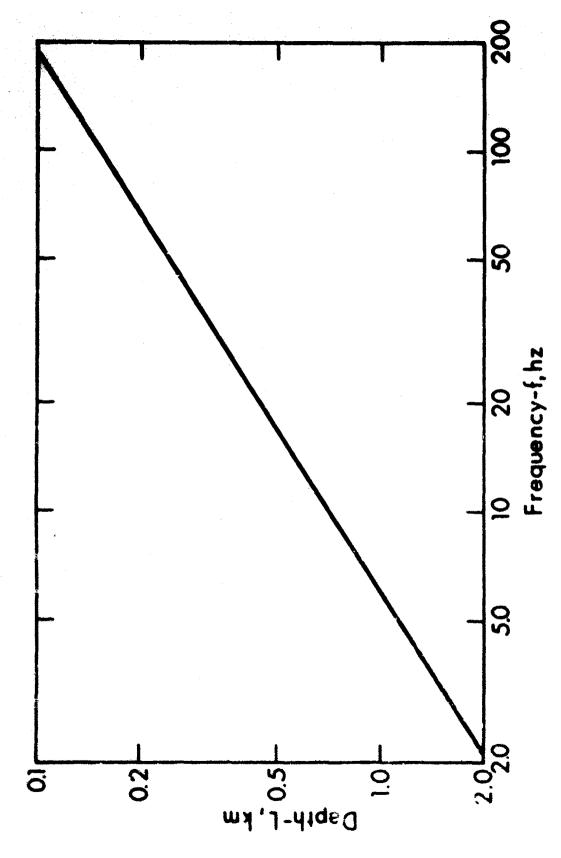


Fig. 6. Graph of the minimum depth of the RSR duct capable of trapping any mode at a given frequency. Sound speed at the surface is 1460 m sec-1, with a constant gradient of 0.014 sec-1.

quencies which are lower than those of their abyssally generated forerunners indicates excitation of RSR normal modes at greater depths. Nearly all of such energy will also be ducted into the sofar channel upon entering regions of warmer sutface water.

CONCLUSION

Earthquakes under deep slopes generate <u>T</u> phases as efficiently as earthquakes under shallow slopes. In either case the short onset and decay rates indicate that the <u>T</u> waves are produced at radiators of restricted dimensions. In contrast, abyssal <u>T</u> phases, which are produced in the vicinity of trenches or over the flat ocean floor, show onset and decay rates for which a uniform scattering horizon is indicated. The production of <u>T</u> waves at a sloping bottom is ascribed to scattering from the bottom, either initially or in the course of multiple reflection within the water wedge.

Deep-slope \underline{T} waves generated within the Central Pacific follow off-axis sofar paths. This hypothesis may be tested by comparing observed and predicted arrival times at Midway, with those at Wake, or at Eniwetok, from accurately located sources along the East Pacific Rise.

Abyasal \underline{T} waves from the subarctic region are of distinctly higher frequencies than are abyasal \underline{T} waves from lower latitudes. This difference is ascribed to downward ducting of higher frequency energy from the subarctic surface channel.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Hydrophone recording was conducted by the Pacific Missile Range. William M. Adams kindly allowed us the use of the sound spectrograph of the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center. This work was funded by the Advanced Research Projects Agency through Office of Naval Research contract None 3748(01).

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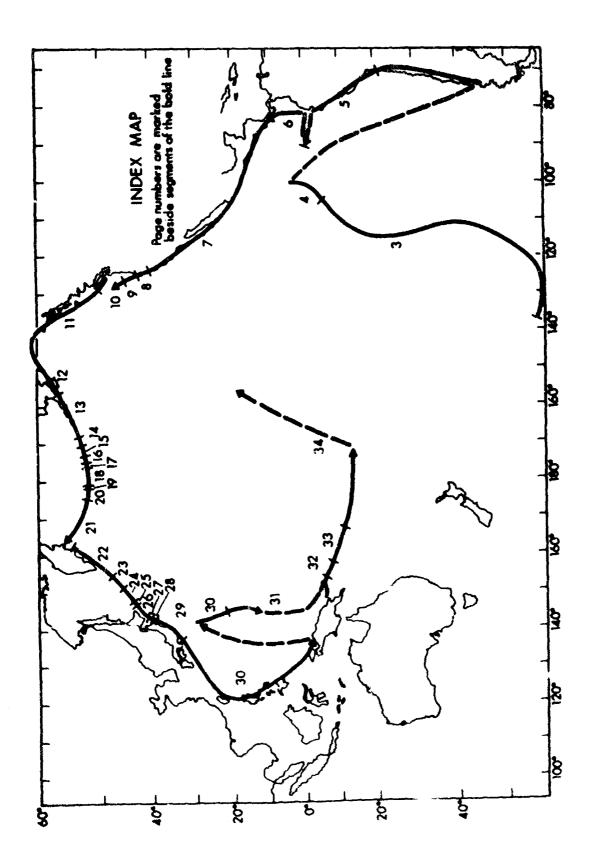
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APPENDIX



APPENDIX

The order of the sonagrams presented here is by geographic location starting on the Eas Pacific Rise and proceeding as diagrammed on the map on the facing page. Page numbers are written by segments of the position line.

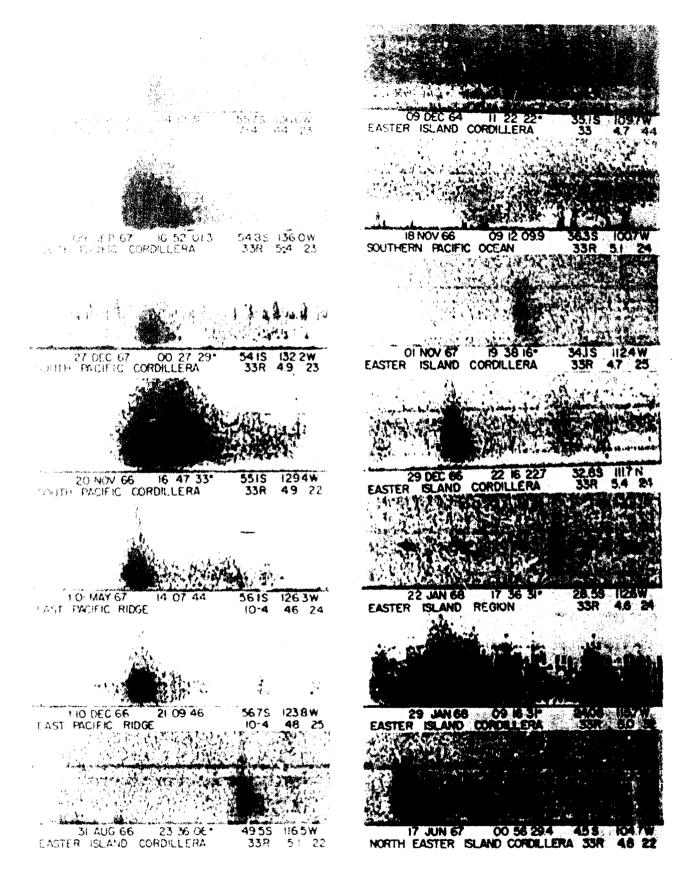
The annotation of sonagrams, with few exceptions, is the annotation used on <u>C&GS Preliminary Determination of Epicenters</u> cards. Some events which were not located by C&GS but by hydrophone network are marked by a dagger and annotated in the form used in the <u>HIG T-Phase Source Locations</u>.

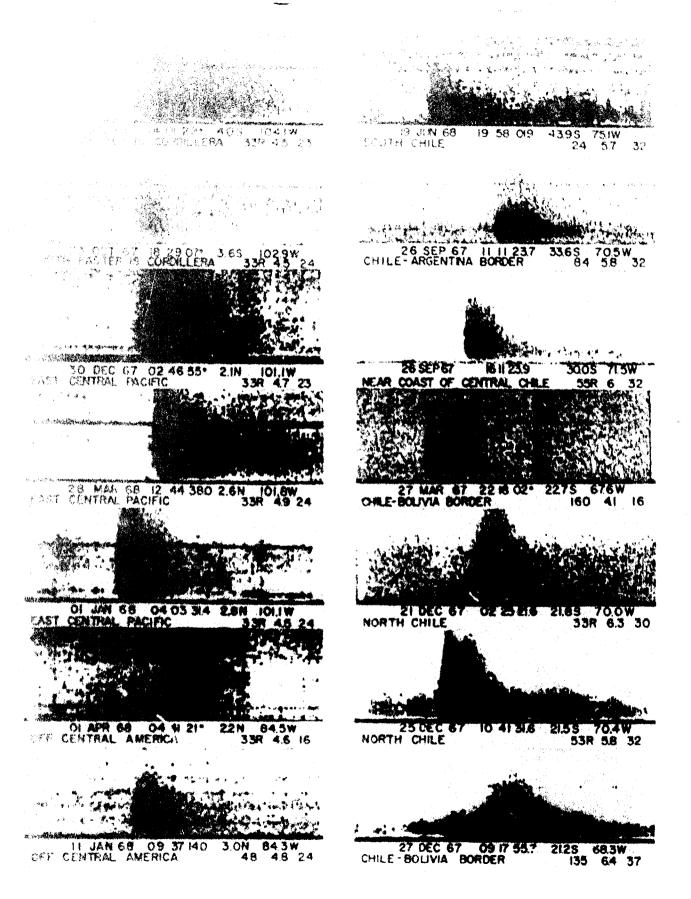
C&GS annotation:

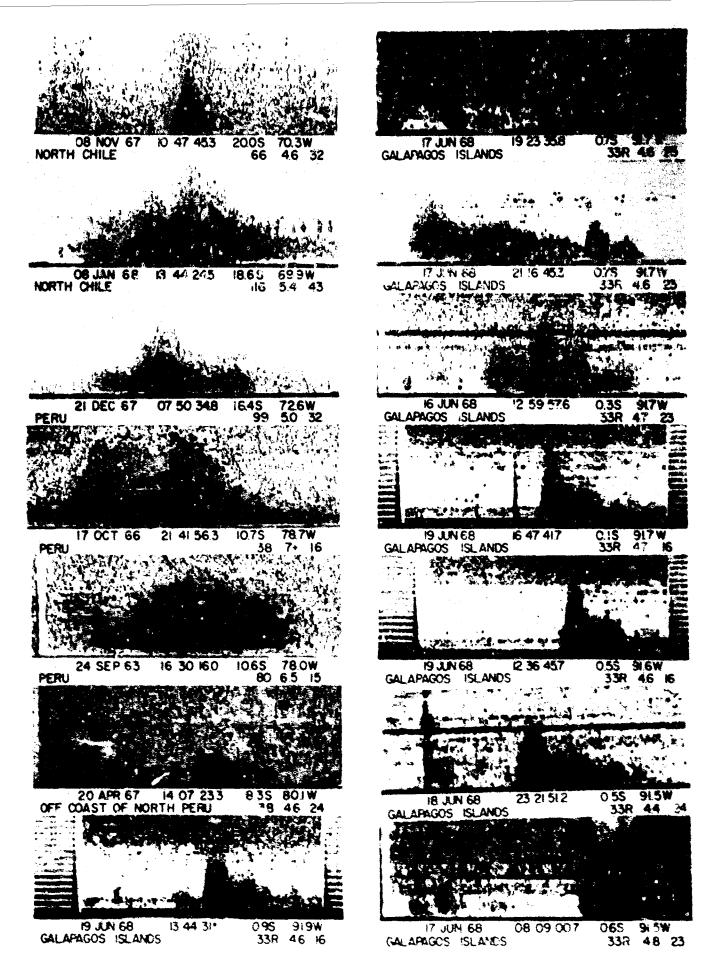
29 DEC 66	22 16 22.7	32.8S		111.7N
EASTER ISLAND CORDILLERA		33R	5.4	24
area name	Greenwich time	depth,	magni- tude	hvdro- phone no.
HIG T-Phase annotation:				
†24 MAY 67	04 12 31	55.78		136.6W
EAST PACIFIC RIDGE		7-4	44	23
area name	Greenwich time	number of phones-no.		age hydro- ngth, phone no.

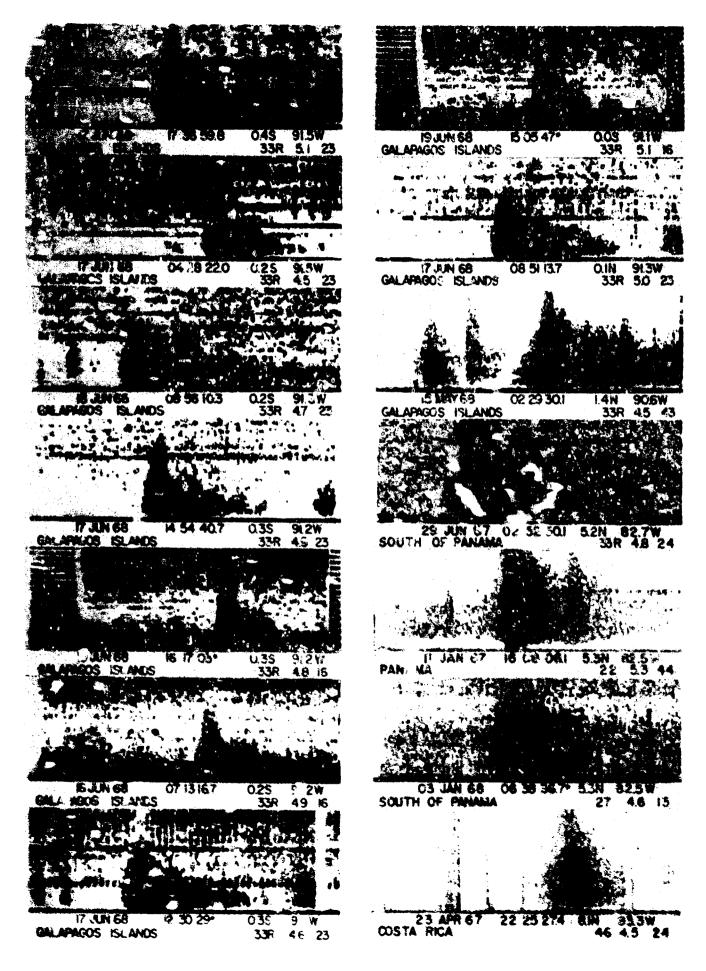
Hydrophones at Oahu, Midway, Wake, and Eniwetok are numbered in the 10's, 20's, 30's, and 40's, respectively.

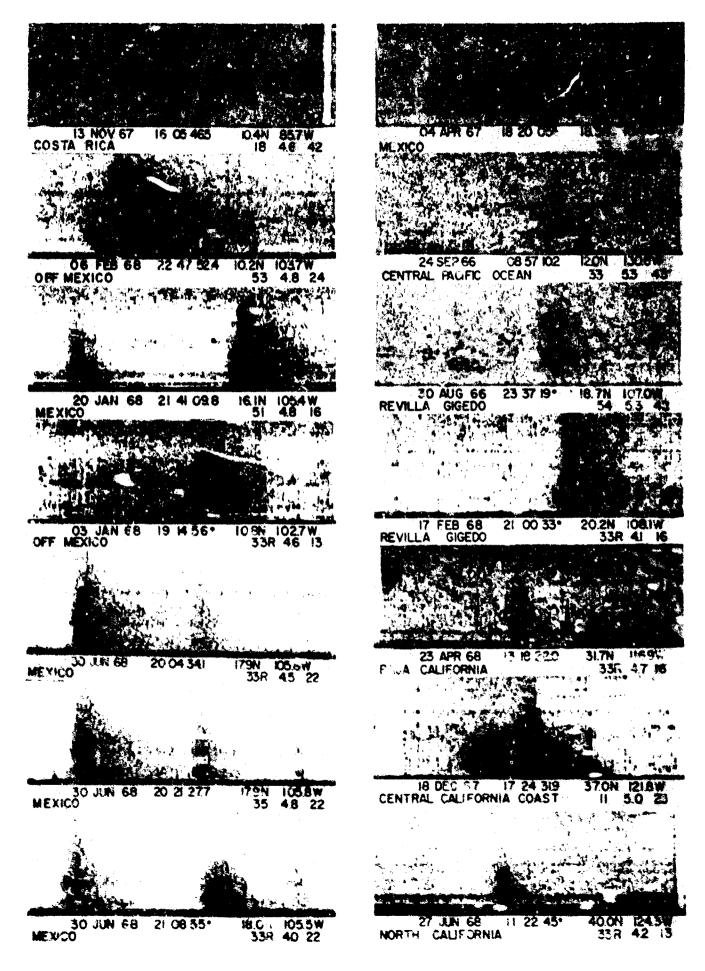
The sonagrams display relative intensity contoured in the frequency-time plane. They have an intensity range of 42 db (seven 6 db contours). Frequencies range, vertically, from 0 to 50 hz. The duration of a single sonagram is 6.4 minutes.

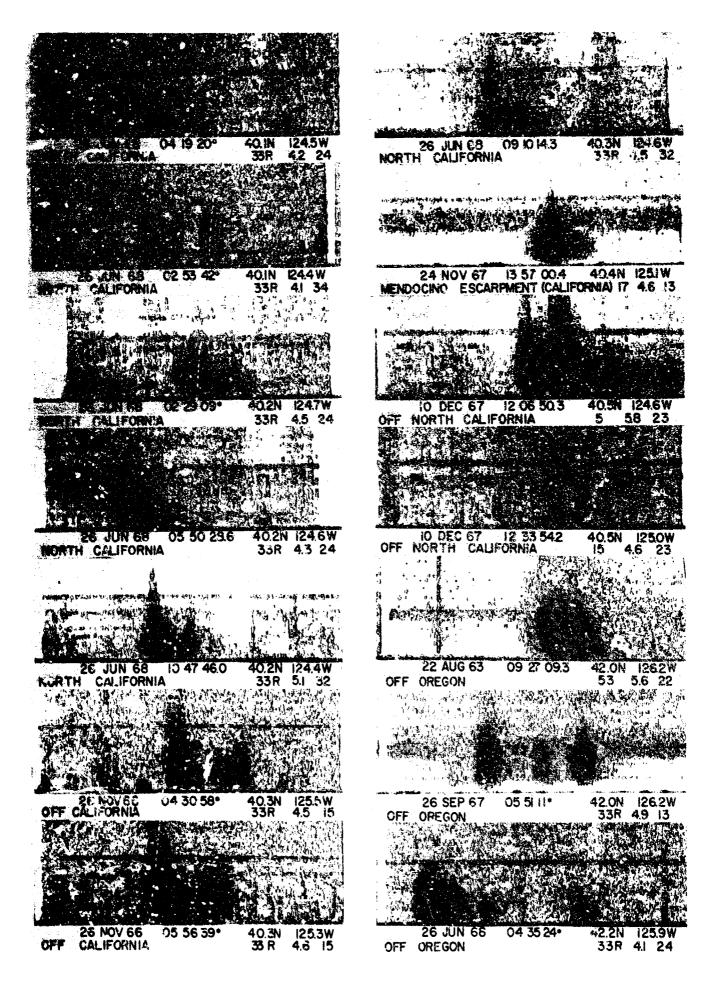


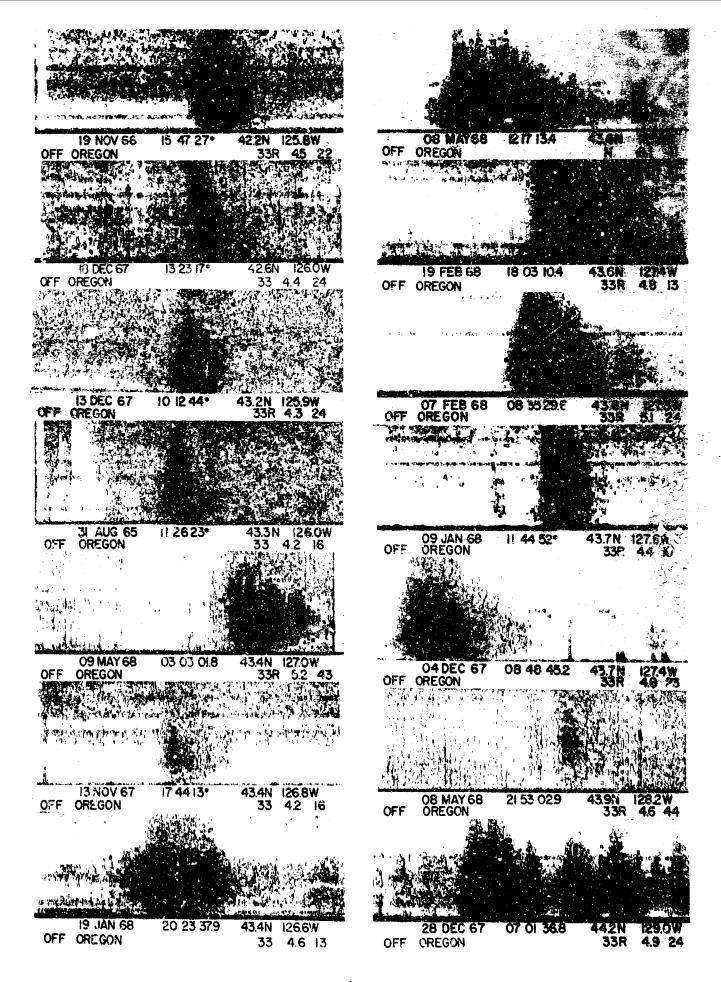


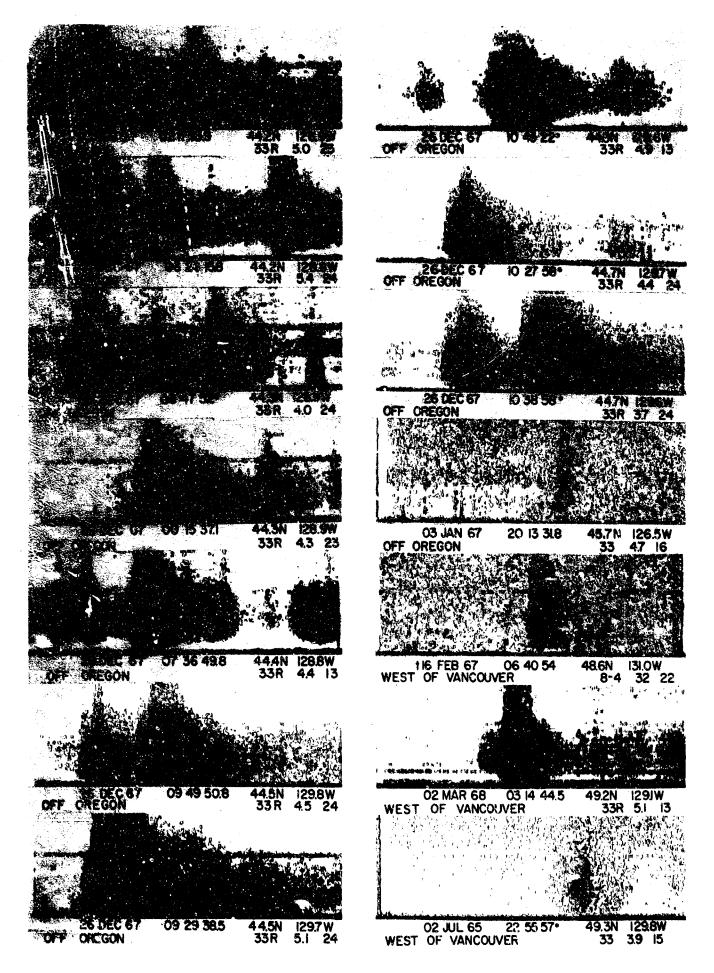


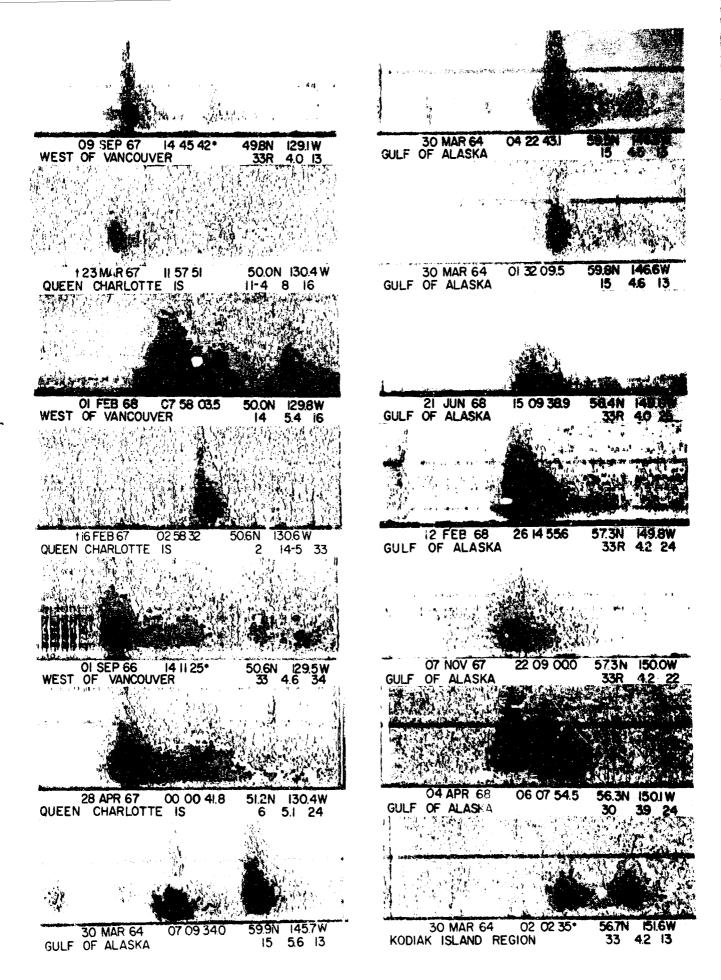


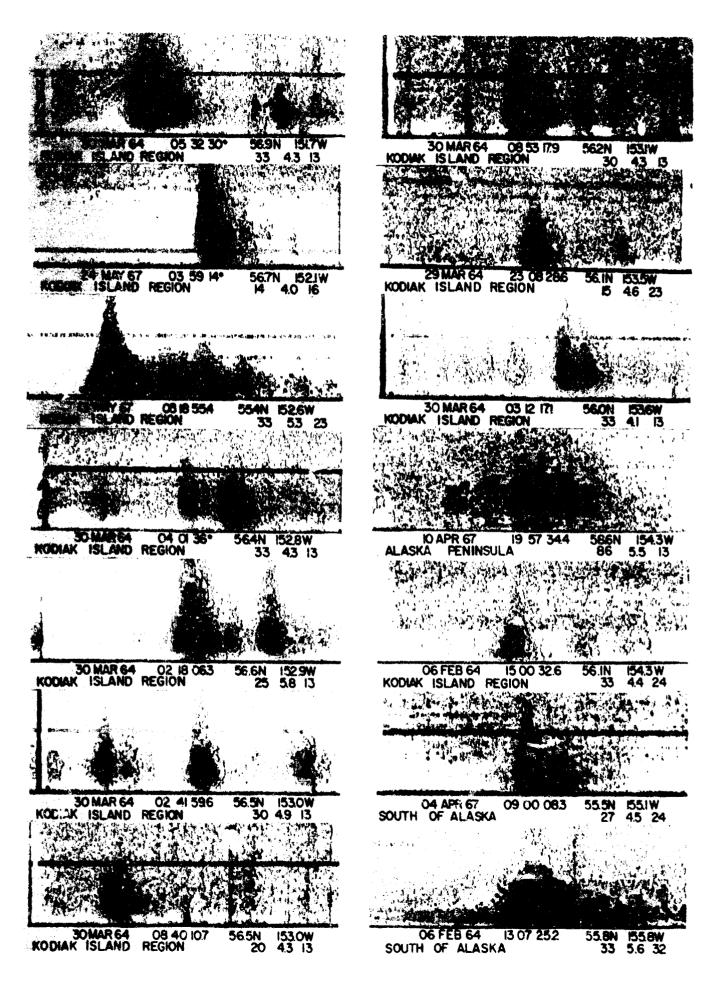


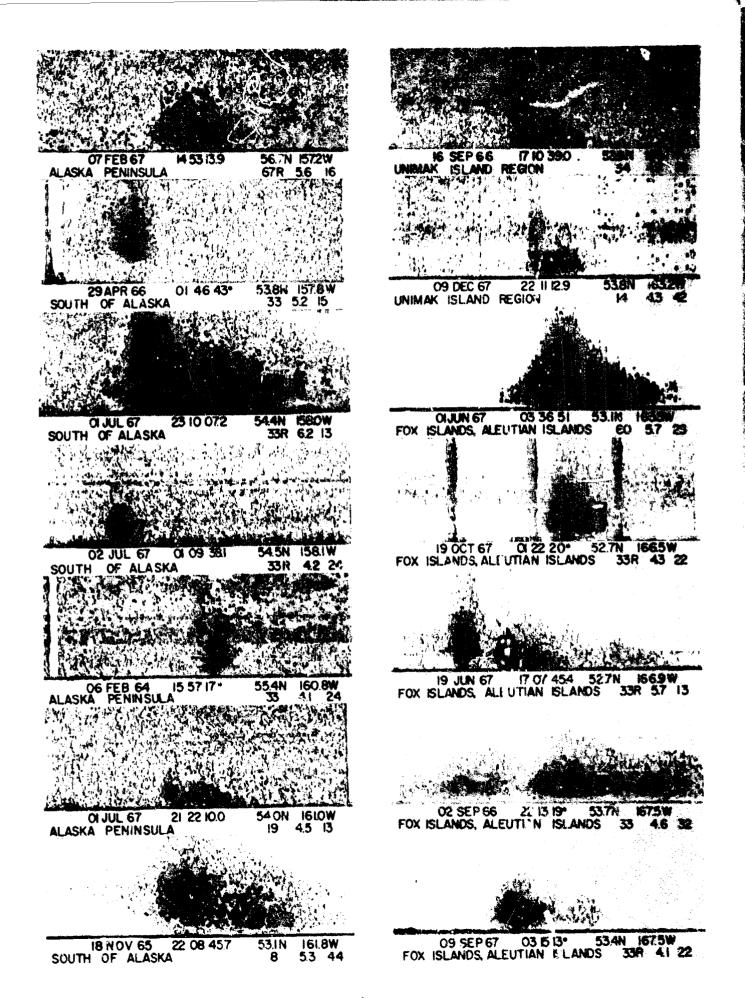


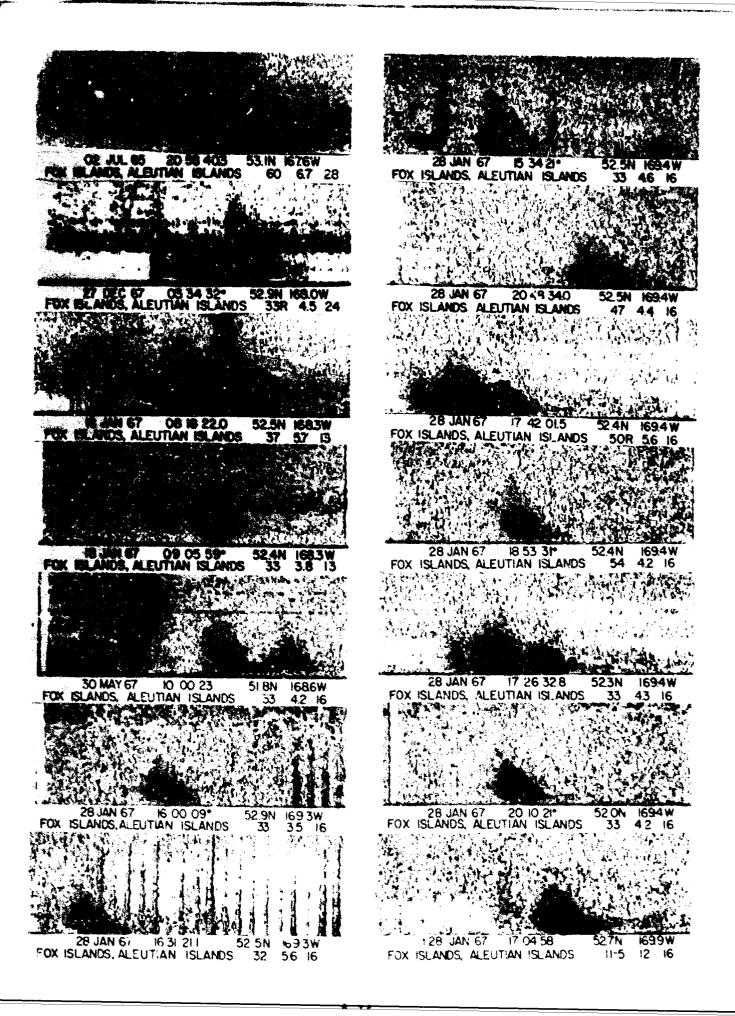


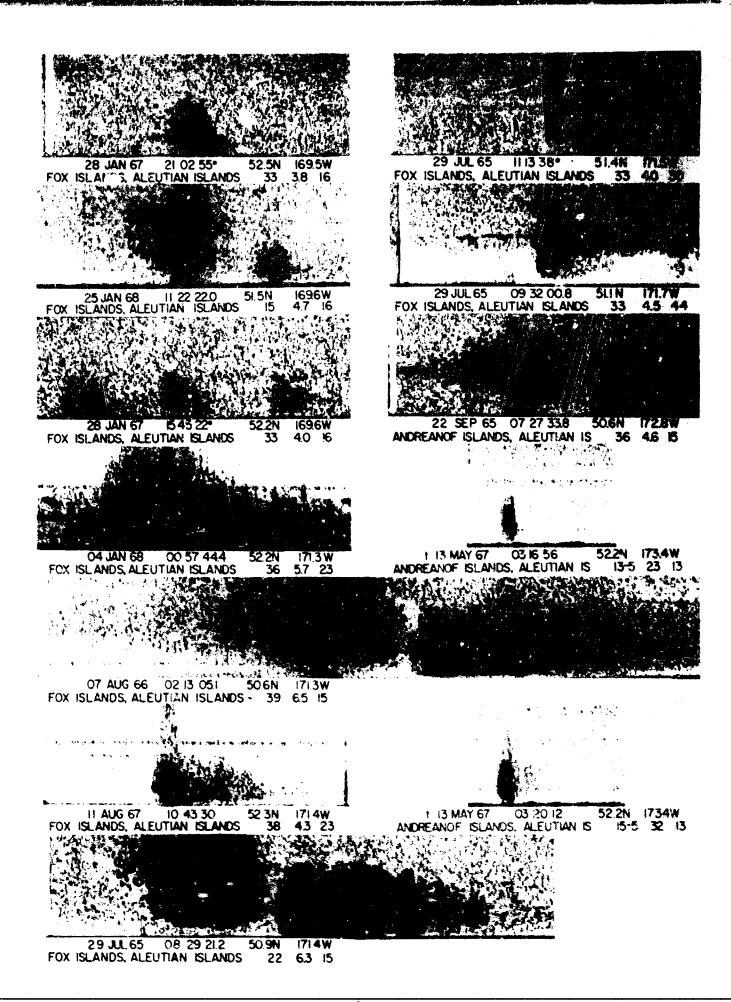


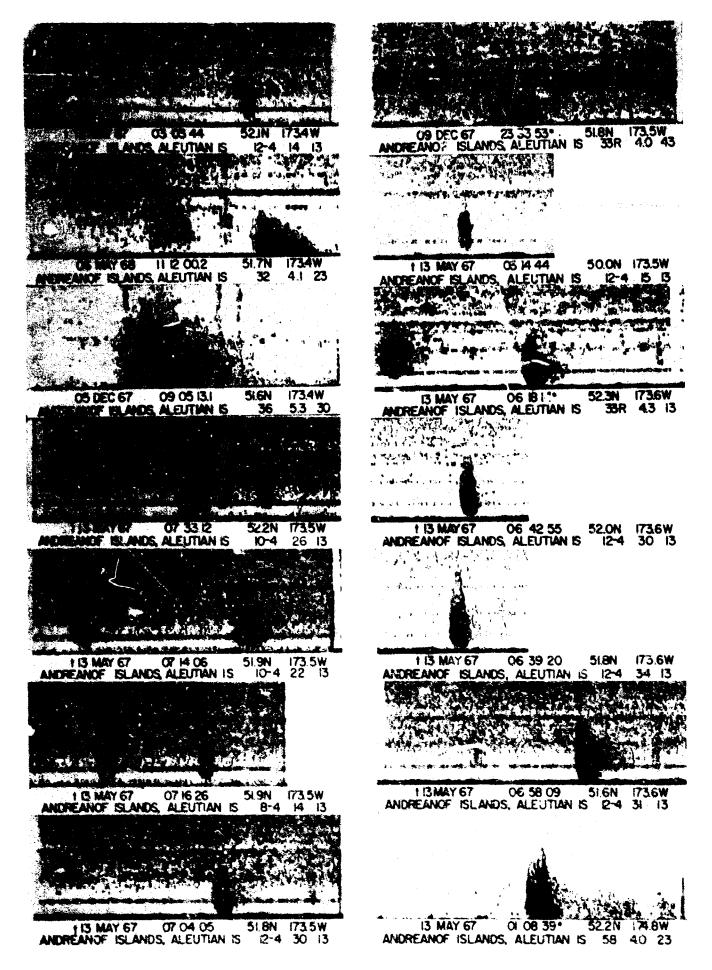


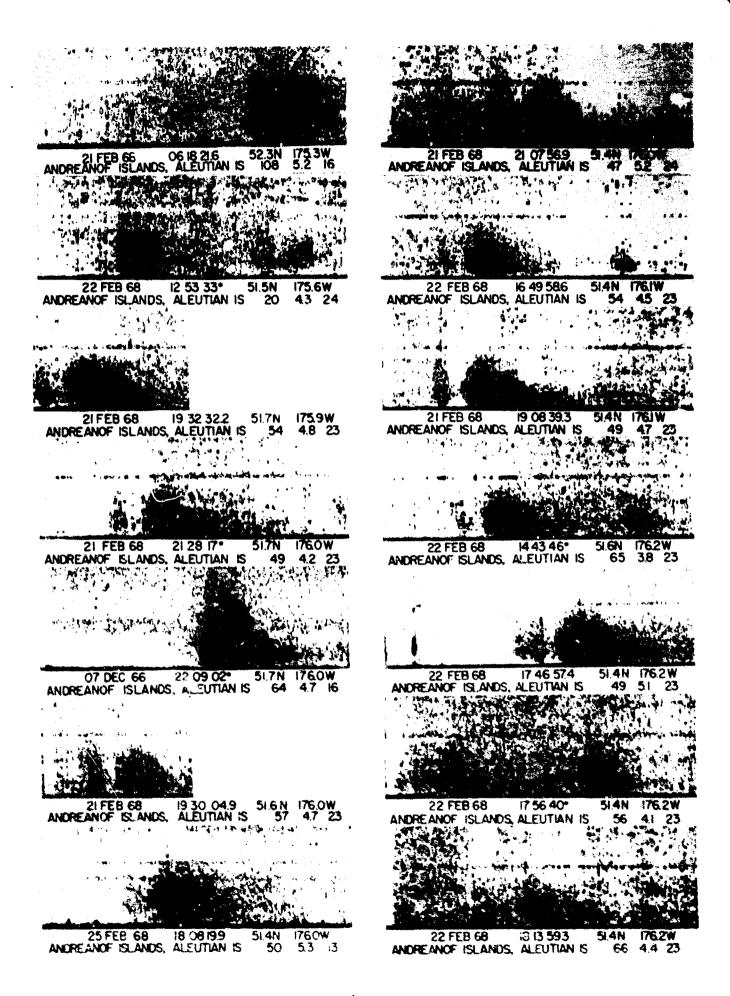


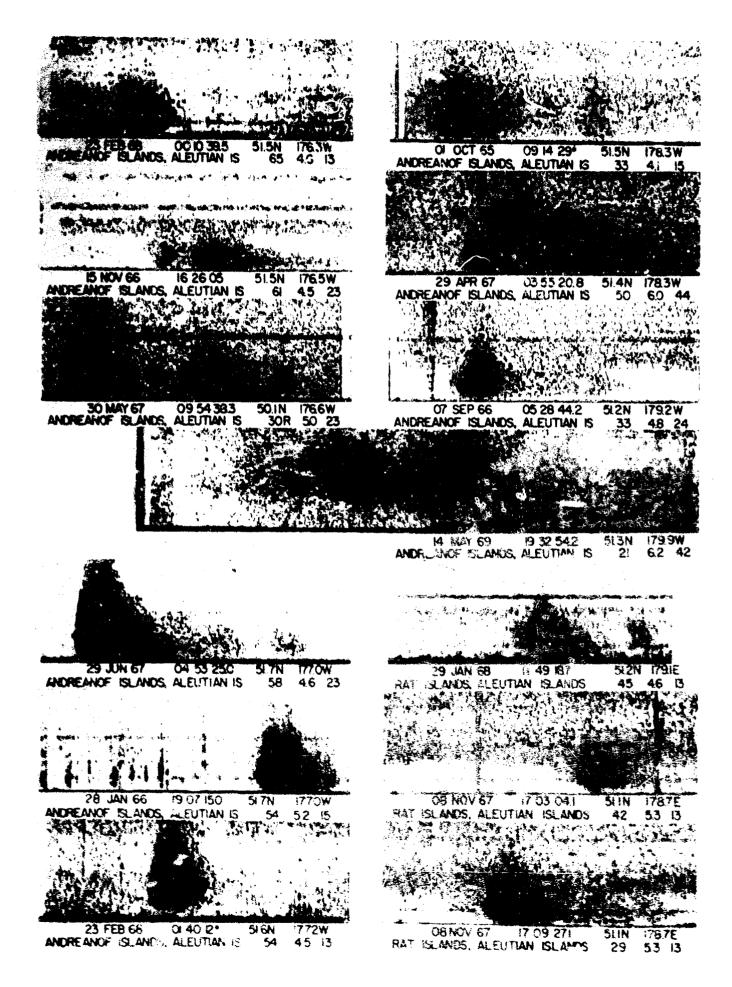


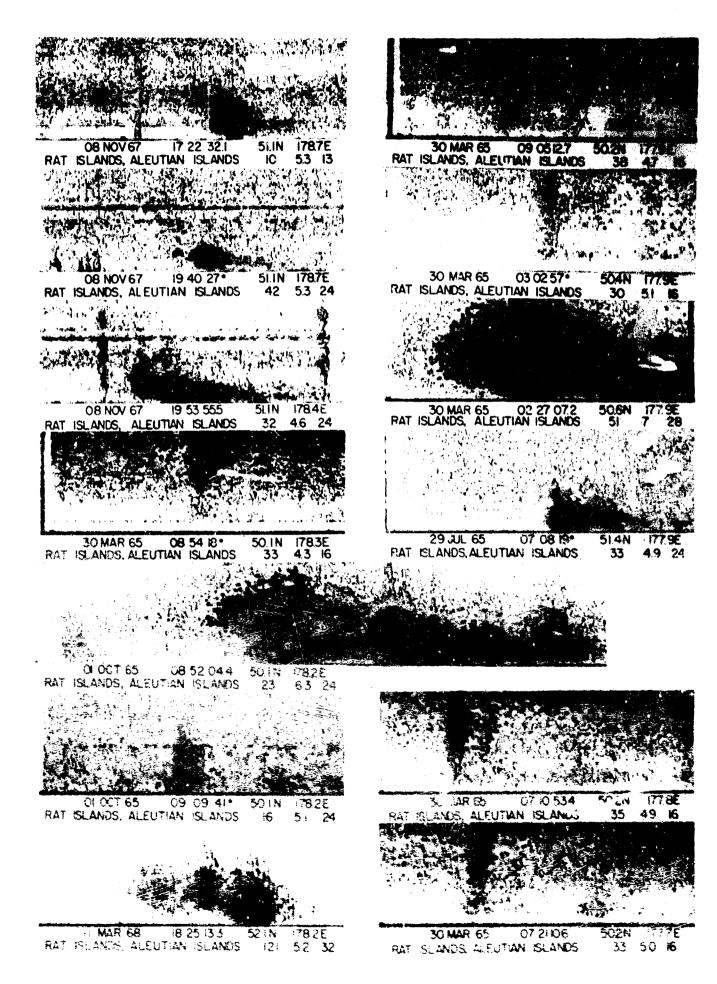


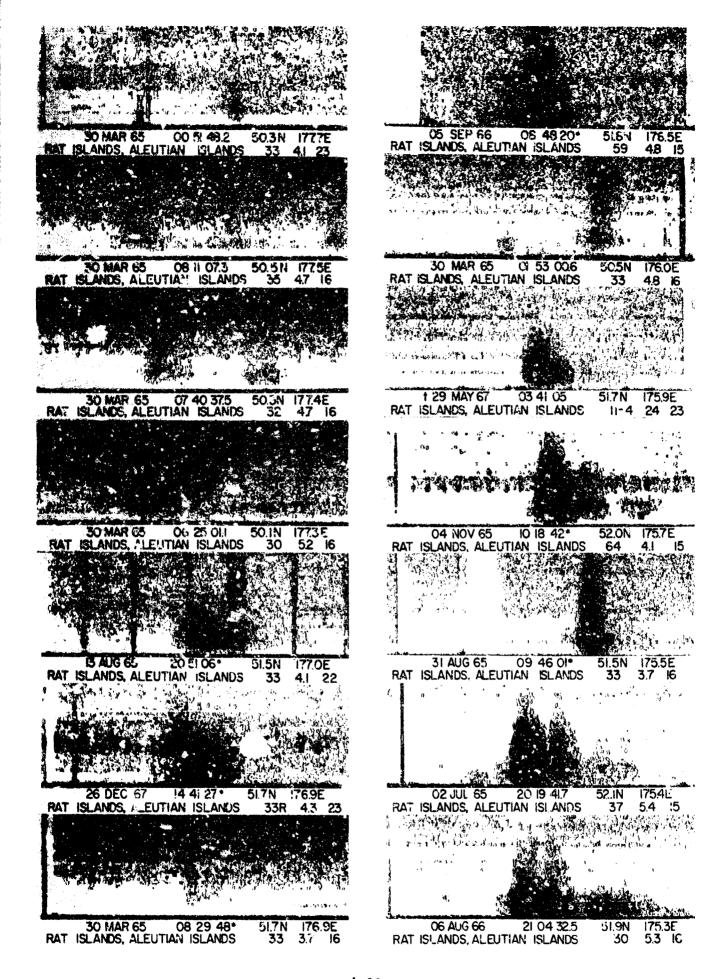


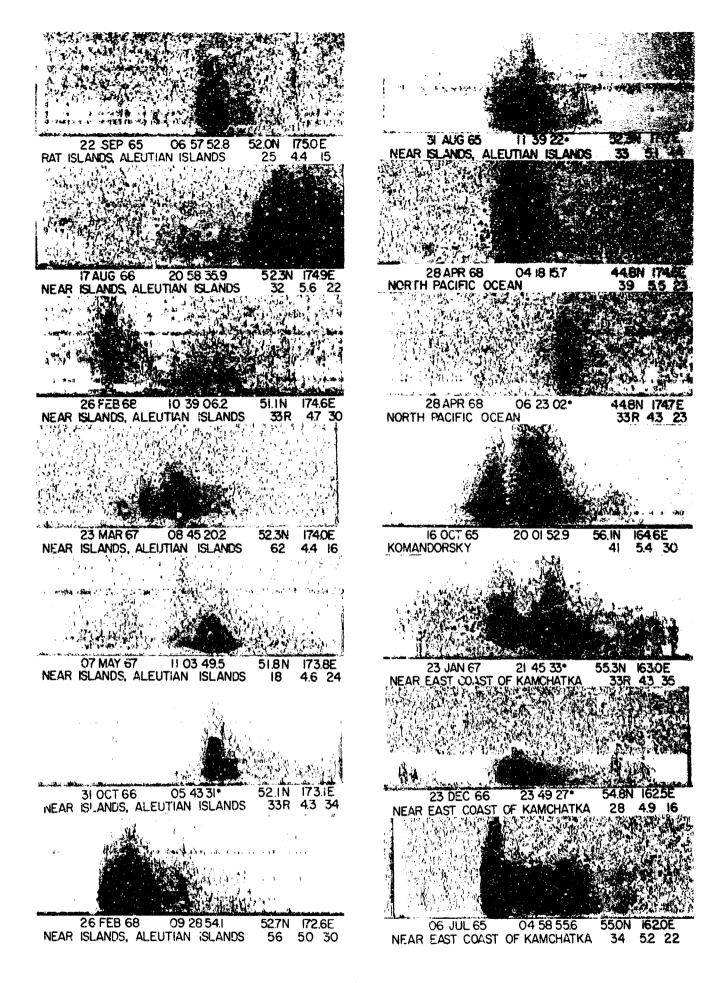


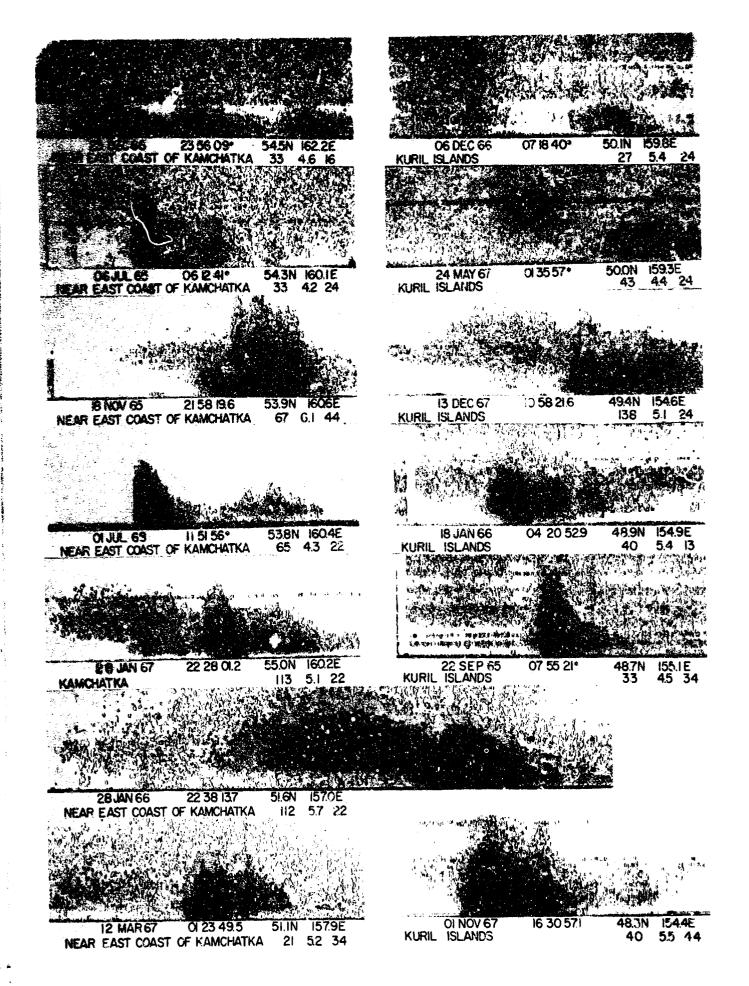


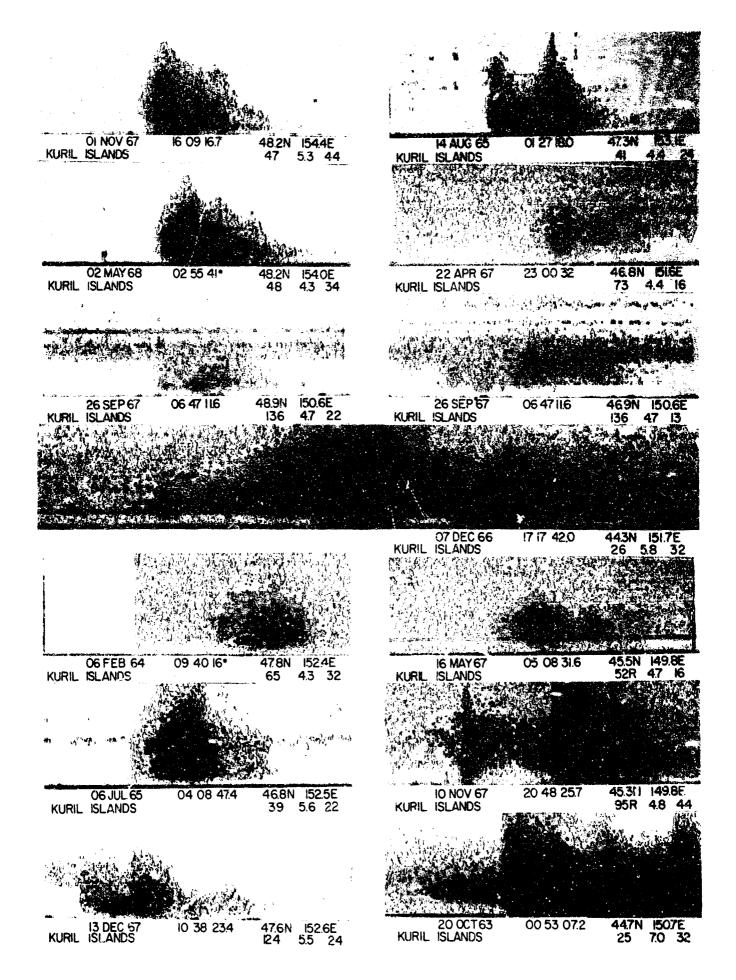


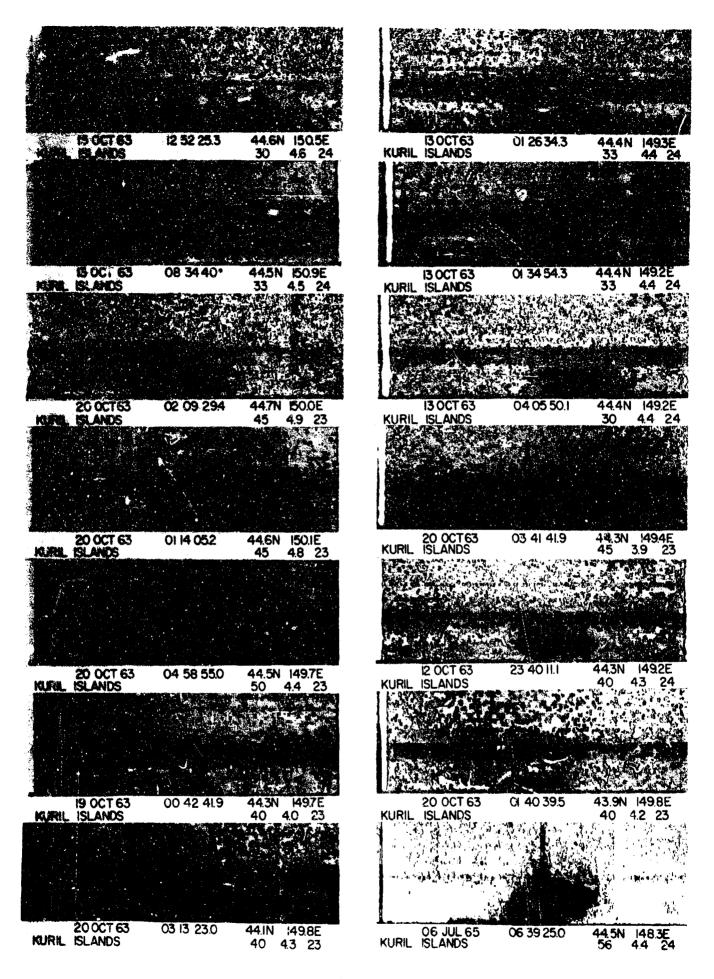


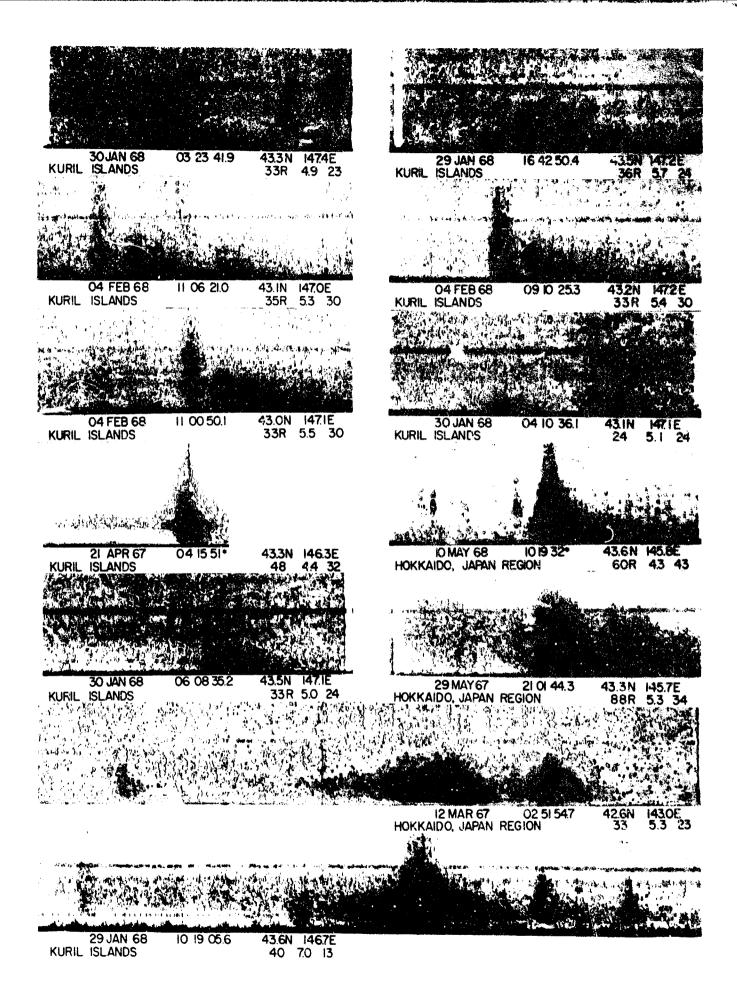


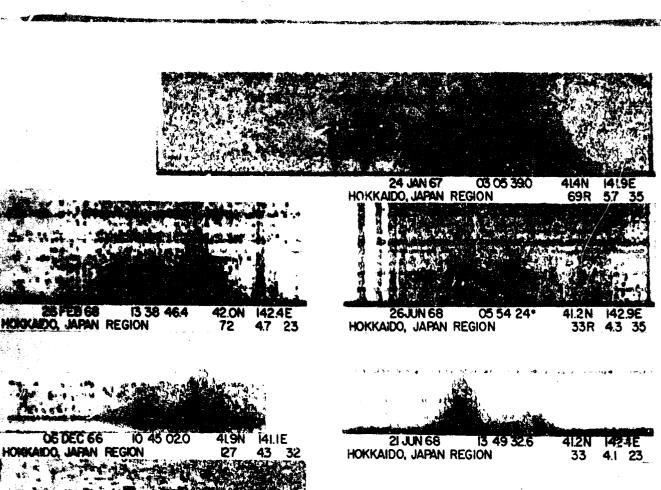


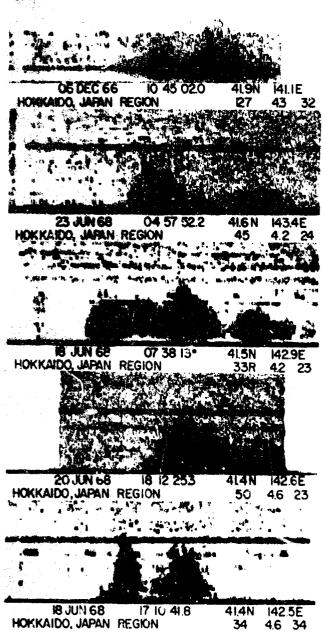


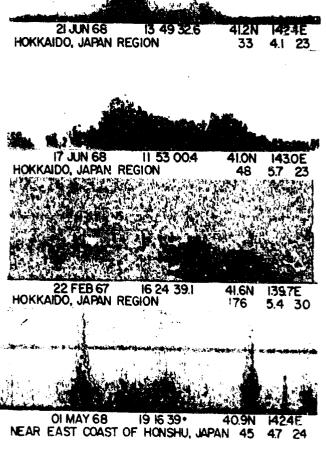


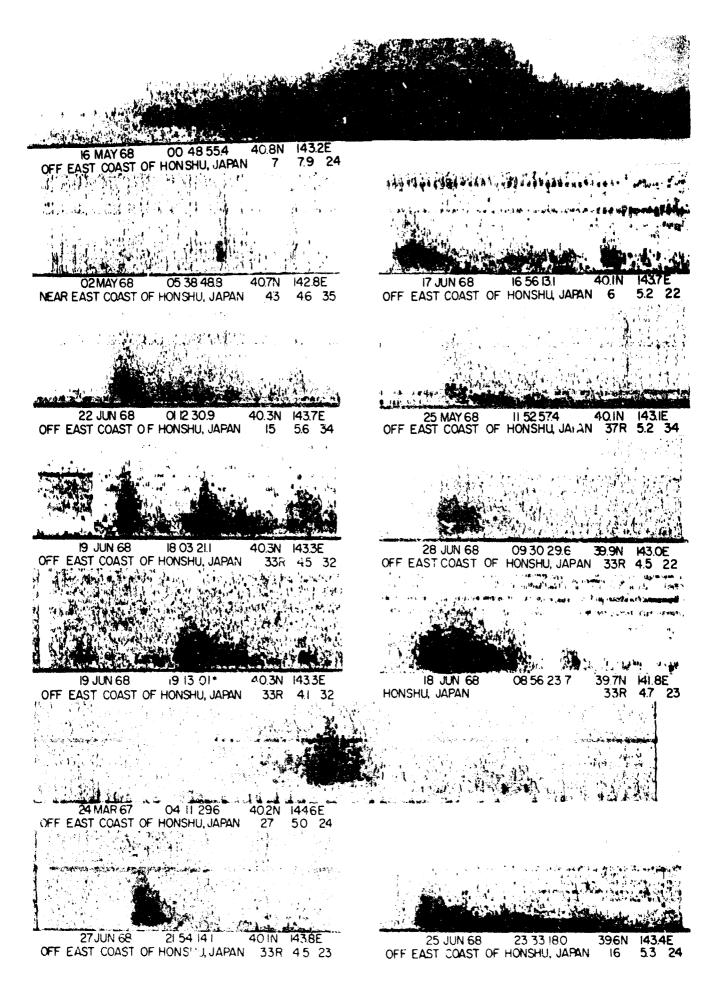


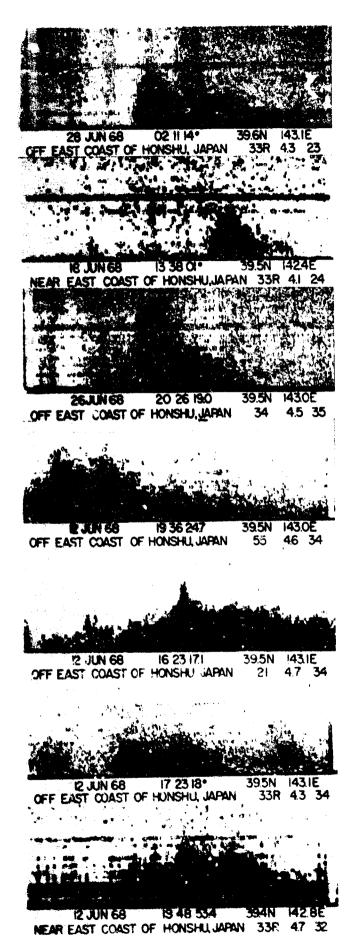


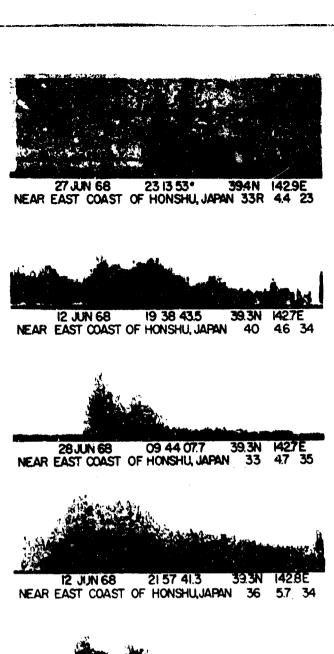


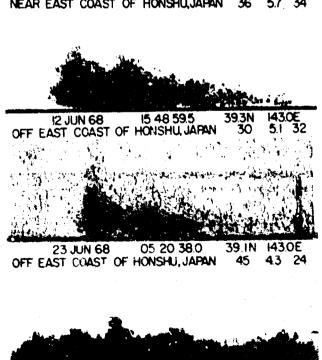










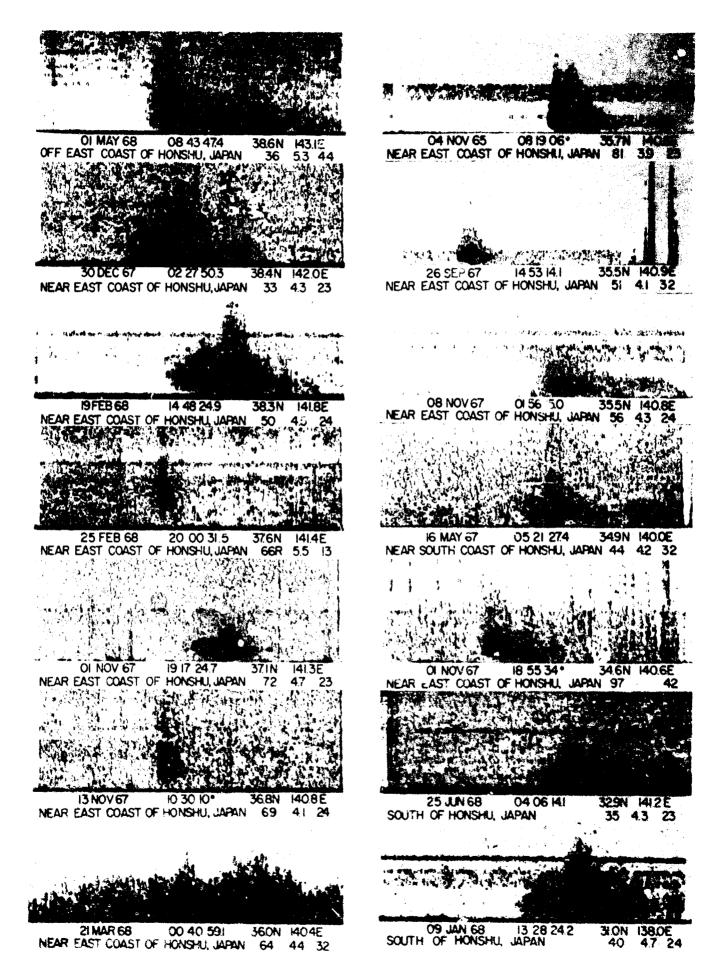


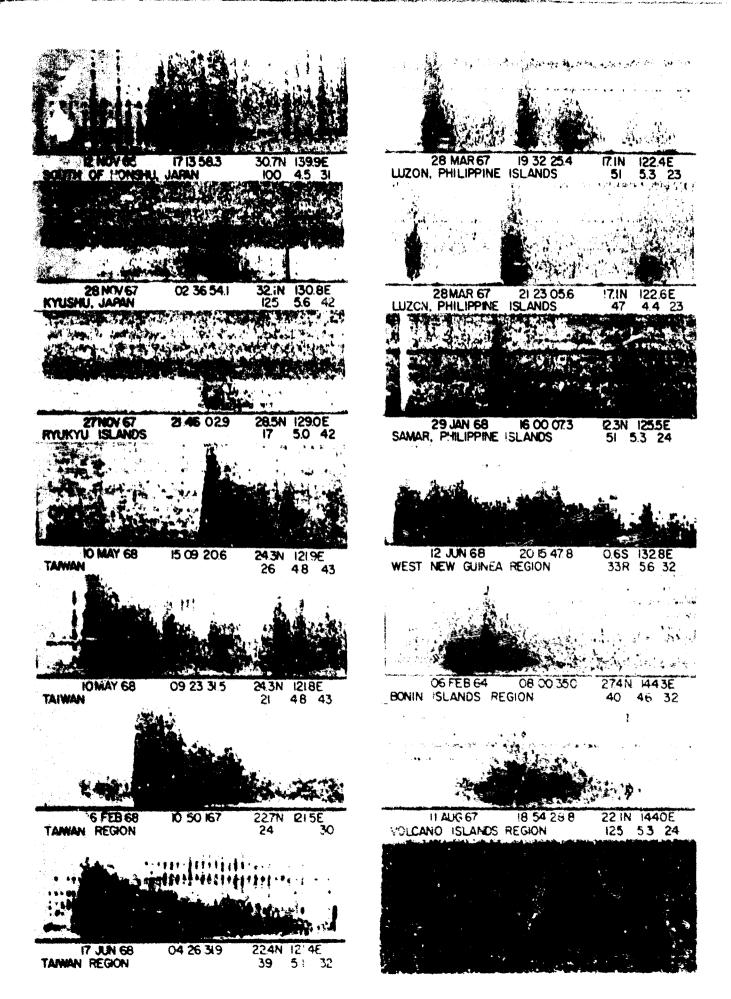
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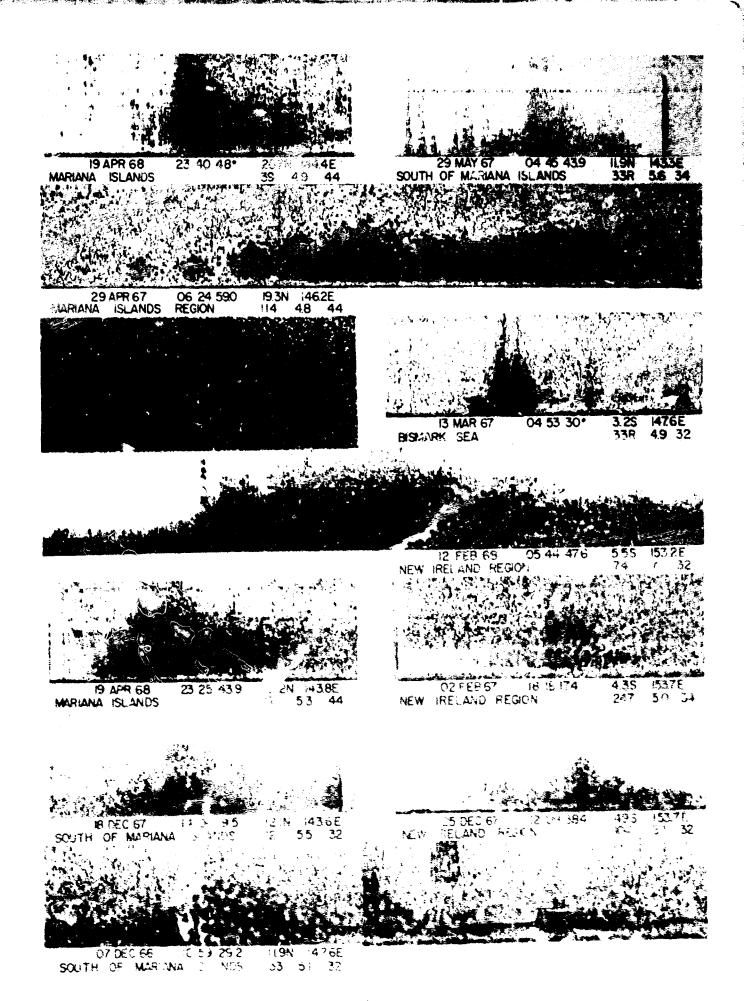
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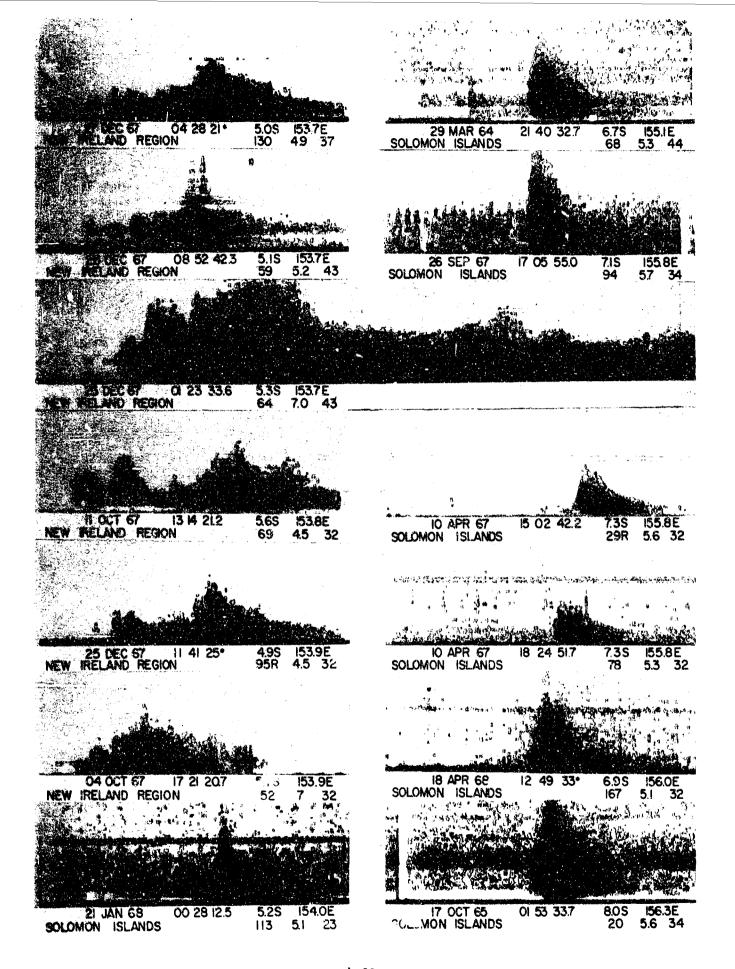
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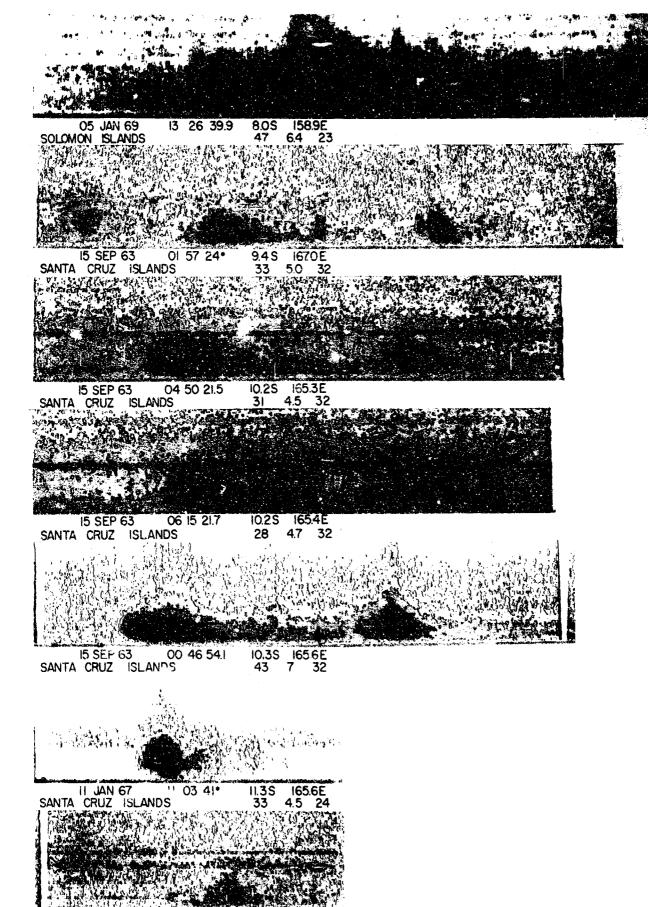
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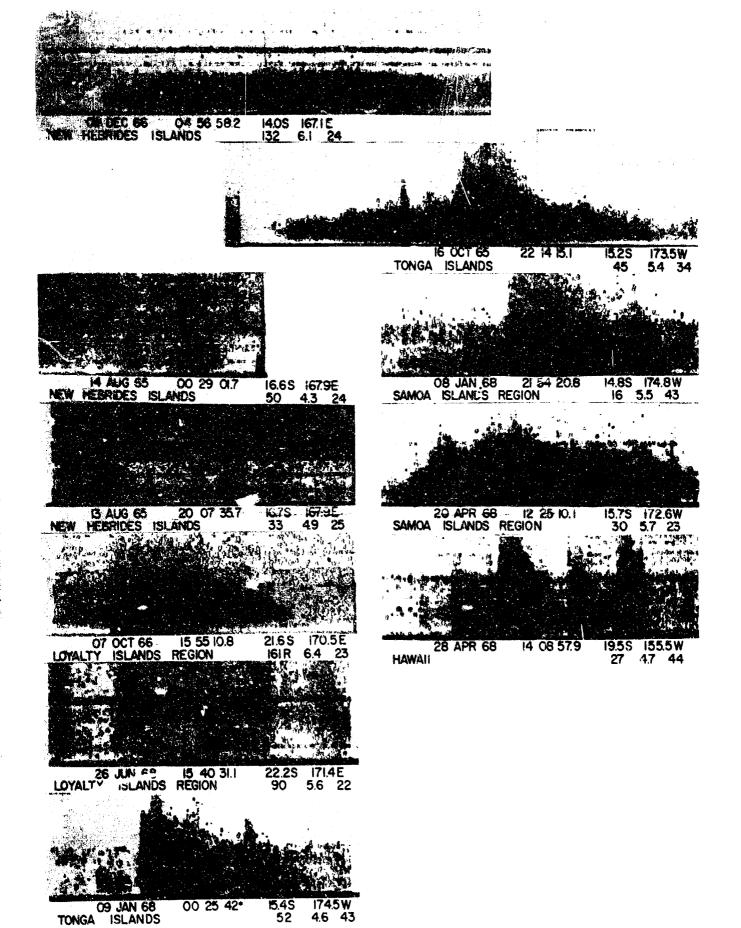




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13 ABSTRACT

The transformation of earthquake body waves to T waves is as efficient at deep slopes as at slopes which transect the sofar axis. Moreover, spectral studies of T phase signatures have shown no basis for distinguishing between the two cases. As simple downslope propagation is inadequate to explain the production of T waves at deep slopes, that process is relegated a minor role in favor of scattering from the sea floor as the dominant mechanism. A slope in the direction of propagation insures that once energy is scattered in that direction the probability of it. be ig unfavorably rescattered upon successive approaches to the sea floor will be less. Scattering near the sea surface is detectable in the absence of bottom-scattered T waves. Such abyssally generated T waves display a distinctly higher frequency spectrum when originating in subarctic regions than when originating in lower latitides. This difference is ascribed to downward ducting of higher frequency energy from the subarctic surface channel.

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